

## Return of the Ancient Ones “Sturgeon”



F. Alegria/MNN

Students from the Menominee Indian High School participated in the releasing of the sturgeon.

Francisco Alegria  
*Menominee Nation News*

April 11, 2005 was the first beautiful spring day of the season. This day also brought the return of the Sturgeon to the Menominee Indian Reservation.

Looking down the road at Chickney Creek was a full-size Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) truck with a large holding tank. Inside the tank were fifteen sturgeons that the

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## Washinawatok honored during sturgeon celebration



Ingrid Washinawatok was honored at the Sturgeon Celebration. Family members, stand with pride remembering all of Ingrid's great accomplishments.

Francisco Alegria  
*Menominee Nation News*

The Menominee Historic Preservation Department held the Annual Menominee Sturgeon Feast, Celebration and Pow-Wow on April 16th at the Menominee Indian High School in Keshena. The Sturgeon Celebration was a spectacular display of Menominee Culture and History and genuine honor. The Menominee

Nation at it's finest.

This year the Menominee Historic Preservation Department honored the memory of a dynamic Menominee woman, Ingrid Washinawatok El Issa. There were over 600 people who attended this year's big cultural event. There were many smiles, tears, memories and a mutual feeling of honor was perceived by all in attendance.

The day of events began with the grand

entry which demonstrated an electrifying display of colors and sounds. The host drum, Five Clan Singers sang the Flag Song or Native American Anthem. Following was Musqakwat Corn, who gave the traditional invocation. Mr. Joe Awonohopay was the Master of Ceremonies for the day and Mr. Gary Besaw was the Arena Director. Llewellyn “Whatta” Tucker was the Head Male

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## Celebration of Learning Day

Anita Unger  
*Menominee Nation News*

On Tuesday, April 19, 2005, the College of Menominee Nation held their 2nd annual Celebration of Learning Day.

Activities were held throughout the day for all ages, including the children. The first 25 children at lunch and after school received a prize. The children were hurrying in to receive their prizes.

Joining the Celebration were the Neopit Middle School. They brought three buses of children to experience all the learning activities that CMN had in store for them.

At 11a.m. two brave graduating students, Linda Delgado and Terri Carlson, shared their portfolios with other classmates, faculty, family, and friends. The presentations were very emotional as it meant the students were coming to an end of a two or



A.Unger-MNN

The Menominee Middle School enjoyed their day at the Celebration of Learning Day. The children had Hulla Hoop competitions outside.

three year journey. Both agreed that they didn't want to leave but leaving meant getting further in life. The graduates portfolio was filled with many assignments that needed to be completed for many classes in the

time they spent at CMN. Assignments that were placed in the portfolio was to have met one of the many education objectives. Both students are

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## **Sturgeon Celebration continued from front page**

Dancer and Roseanne Otradovec was the Head Female Dancer. They all had big responsibilities and did an outstanding job.

After the Veteran's Honor Song, Menominee Tribal Chairman, Michael Chapman gave a wonderful traditional welcome on behalf of the Menominee Tribal Legislature. In his opening remarks he stated, "It's an extraordinary honor to stand here before you and welcome you on behalf of the Menominee Tribal Legislature. I am pleased that seven out of nine Menominee Legislators are here today." He also said, "Today, with this feast and festival we honor the changing of the seasons – and we specifically pay tribute to the sturgeon, who have sustained us for centuries. We are also honoring Ingrid Washinawatok, Flying Eagle Woman and her efforts to help sustain our culture and language. In many respects she was a roving Ambassador for our people, for she traveled near and far and always carried her Menominee heritage with respectful pride. "In honoring the Sturgeon we are also honoring Ingrid Washinawatok" "It is really an honor that we share this day in memory of her and in honor of the sturgeon they are both important to our culture. We will be with you most of the day and we will have a wonderful feast and a good time."

Dave "Nahwahquaw" Grignon, the director of the Historic Preservation Department also gave some opening comments, "Posoh, Nec-Omaehnohminniwuk (Hello my fellow Menominee), I am glad to see all the singers and dancers come out today, this is a historical occasion for the Menominee People. I am just happy that everyone came to share in this traditional, spiritual and cultural moment for the Menominee, Nahow."

At the beginning of the honor ceremony Mr. Grignon told the audience "This year we thought it be appropriate that to honor one of our tribal members that passed away in 1999, Ingrid Washinawatok El Issa for all she has done for Indian people and people throughout the world, especially in North and South America." Dave called Ingrid's family forward and introduced Chairman Chapman to begin the ceremony.

Chairman Michael Chapman read a moving Proclamation on behalf of the Menominee Tribal Legislature in memory of Ingrid and presented it to the family.

A proclamation is the highest form a recognition anyone can receive by the Menominee Tribal governing body.

Tribal Legislator Ken Fish read a letter from the Americans for Indian Opportunity. Mr. Fish started by thanking the family for Ingrid Washinawatok. He said, "She was a warrior, a very courageous warrior" "The family has received a letter from the Americans for Indian Opportunity, which is a nationally recognized organization throughout the United States that has assisted and helped Indian tribes and Indigenous people for many years, one of the most respected in this country."

The letter reads, "To the family of Ingrid Washinawatok El Issa of the Menominee Nation dear friends and relatives: It is our honor to send a message of peace in loving memory of our sister Ingrid Washinawatok El Issa. Her life and work will forever be a reminder of the positive changes one person can make in the face of extreme resistance. Americans for Indian Opportunity's board of directors and staff wish to express our gratitude for the diligent work and courage Ingrid gave in native peoples on the occasion of the Menominee Nation's Sturgeon Feast. Ingrid's work is an example of leadership needed to advance the self determination of Indigenous communities and social justice for all peoples." The letter also said, "Her activism and voice was and remains a strong reminder of the power of personal medicine and wisdom, to use it to the good of humanity." "We send our blessing to all of you and congratulate the great Menominee Nation as you celebrate your culture and recognize your leaders, warmest regards, LaDonna Harris, President of the board and Executive

Director, Laura Harris.

Legislator Fish spoke in his own words, "She was an enrolled member of the Menominee Nation. She reached out on many occasions to the Menominee young people and looking at who she was, explaining to young their role in life. She was a warrior many of us at the time recognized her as such. We appreciated her efforts on a national Indian battle. She moved to the international scene in fighting injustice for indigenous people throughout the world.

Unfortunately she was met with tragedy, that tragedy ended her life. While assisting the native communities in Columbia, attempting to set up school systems for the young, so they could become educated to understand and fight for the rights of their fellow countrymen, she was kidnapped, held hostage and assassinated by warlords of that nation. She sacrificed her life not just for indigenous peoples but for justice. From the bottom of my heart and for many Menominee warriors, whether it's veterans of the wars, whether it's legislator's trying to make a change, is that, she is one to be admired and be recognized as a true Menominee Warrior." The Menominee Tribal Historic Preservation Office put together a beautiful plaque with photographs of Ingrid in different stages of her life with an engraved inscription to memorialize Ingrid. Dave Grignon the Director read the magnificent plaque to the family;

On July 31, 1957, Ingrid was born into a culturally rich family of the Menominee Nation. In her youth she loved the Menominee Forest, swam and played in the crystal waters of LaMotte Lake, treasured her family and friends and cherished her Menominee Heritage. As a young woman, Ingrid lived and believed in her father's gallant fight in the Restoration of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. All of these traditional family values were forever instilled in Ingrid. As a Menominee Woman she carried on the traditions of her family and Nation to become a world leader in fighting for Indigenous peoples freedoms of; Native Religion and Cultural Traditions, Indigenous Languages, Education and a devout Protector of the Environment and the Land she deeply loved. In her own words: "We talk about 'our' Sovereignty, but instead of being only a human concept 'our' must be inclusive of all creation's Sovereignty. Sovereignty is not a right & responsibility reserved for all human beings. Sovereignty is an integral component within the rest of creation and belongs to all components of that creation. We can not forget that." (Ingrid Washinawatok) In her work of peace and justice throughout the world Ingrid Washinawatok El Issa's spirit will never be forgotten. The Menominee Tribal Historic Preservation Office along with the Menominee Nation will be eternally proud." Dated, April 16, 2005. Menominee Sturgeon Feast and Celebration.

An appropriate honor song for Ingrid Washinawatok El Issa followed. The family was escorted by the Veterans of the Menominee Nation Honor Guard Unit. Virtually the entire audience came down to congratulate and honor Ingrid's distinguished family.

The ceremony continued with an emotionally heartwarming performance by Robert and Marris Tucker who composed a song and dedicated in memory of Ingrid. The lights dimmed, an unforgettable slide show of Ingrid from infancy to her adult life was shown during the song entitled "Ingrid." The last lyric was, "It was you that made me feel these things, you lay down your weary head, your spirit rest by the riverside. And we'll live on the words you said this way, peace on earth in harmony we pray. Then I'll see your face in the sky and I'll hear your voice in the wind and your heart beat on eagles wings." A huge round of applause echoed throughout the Menominee Indian High School.

The youth also honored Ingrid. The Menominee Tribal School Hoop Dancers, were introduced by their instructor Becky Hawpetoss, "They are here to perform in honor of Ingrid." They were so proud to perform in front of the family and huge audience. They really did their best. The Hoop Dancers were: K.C. Frechette, Cami Perez, Amanda Welk, Mindy Waupoose and Millie Marksman. They were real impressive with some real fancy hoop dancing moves

creating many different forms-one was a flying eagle in honor of Ingrid "Flying Eagle Woman." Another highlight of the day was the Mexica Nation's Danza Mexica Cuauhtemoc. They are cultural dancers who perform dances of their ancestors the ancient Aztecas. Joe Awonohopay made a special announcement that they would not accept any money for their appearance and were here solely in support of the family and in honor Ingrid Washinawatok El Issa. They really did an outstanding performance, their energy and the meanings behind their dances were so deep rooted with cultural importance. They brought their own drum, the head male dancer also drummed while dancing and blew the sacred shell. The energy they created, their movements and their whoops by both men and women was astounding. During their opening dance, they greeted each family member with a honorary hand shake to acknowledge them, while never missing a beat. The Mexica dancers had Ingrid's mother, Gwen, assist them in lighting their sacred fire, for a very special ceremony. Everyone was asked not to tape or photograph during this very cultural sensitive dance because of the deep significance it held.

The honor dances were breathtaking and many spectators commented that, "It was so awesome, they were just great." They were young men and women who include the children and even one of their babies in their dances. The head dancer, Jerry Lopez spoke to the audience, "It is such an honor to be here to honor Ingrid and her beautiful family and to be with her nation, we loved her too."

Ingrid's sister Regina said, "The leader was a very powerful speaker, he spoke straight from the heart. He said, "there isn't a place he goes to that doesn't honor her and remember her. He also thanked the community and family and their causes. He also said, everything they did had a meaning." Regina also said, "It was all done beautifully, they asked my mother to light the fire that the rock held. I know they were real sacred dances, strong, I felt the energy from each one and from their words" It was a commemorative performance that many will never forget.

Aztec (Mexica) dancer, Ayme Almendarez told her point of view of the sturgeon feast. "It was an honor for the Danza Mexica Cuauhtemoc dance circle to celebrate the sturgeon and the honoring for Ingrid Washinawatok with the Menominee. I thought it was very special to be a part of the ceremony and to learn a little bit of the traditions and the ways. We felt very welcomed it gave me a feeling of happiness to be there. I feel like I made new friends and relatives and would like to express my gratitude for the invitation."

The Fish Dance is a authentic Menominee dance to honor the ancient sturgeon. The Fish Dance was lead by head dancer Llewellyn "Whatta" Tucker. The Fish Dance is a dance where the male dancers perform to reenact the sturgeon swimming up stream and the movements symbolize spawning.

The feast itself was grand; Susan Corn Oshkosh was the head cook. She prepared a special plate for the river offering by the Menominee Veterans. Dave Grignon said the feast prayer. The sturgeon was smoked by Bill Cox Jr. The feast consisted of Smoked Sturgeon, Wild Rice, in addition to a small serving that was offered (harvested from the Wolf River), cranberries, hull corn soup fry bread and a special maple syrup cake. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed every bite. Another huge round of applause went to the cooks.

During the second session the head female dancer, Roseanne Otradovec sponsored a team dance. One place, for a nice cash pay out. The audience was the judges. The three teams were all youth dancers and were called: The Fancy Jinglisous, The Menominee Kenupiks and The Fancy Chicks. The winner was the Menominee Kenupiks. It's good to see a head dancer showing their appreciation, when it's for the youth. Good Job.

The last special of the night was a Women's Fancy Shawl contest which was sponsored by the Menominee Historic Preservation Department. The dance was a memorial of Ingrid

Washinawatok El Issa. Ingrid in her younger days was a fine fancy shawl dancer. The contestants did their best foot work ever creating a spectacular sight to see. They were competing for three beautiful eagle trophies on a wood base with a bronze inscription that said, Opetaw Metaehmoh Memorial. Also the winners would take home a light blue silk jacket with white writing across the back that read: "Ingrid Washinawatok El Issa, Opetaw Metaehmoh" "Women's Fancy Shawl" and "Memorial" along with the event and date. Anyone would be proud to have these marks of distinction. First place winner was Alyisha Summers Second place winner was Pamala Waukau, and Third place winner was Angela Mahkimetas. The closing of the event was with a huge give away by the Menominee Historic Preservation Department. Everyone in the house received a give away, something to remind them of this year's Menominee Sturgeon Feast, Celebration and Pow-Wow. An honor song and traveling song wrapped up the night.

This year's Sturgeon Feast and Celebration was a very heartwarming and memorable event that those in attendance will never forget.

### **Celebration of Learning Day CMN continued from front page**

going to be continuing their education and both plan on attending UWGB. Terri will continue on with her Early Childhood and Linda will continue in the Fall of 2006, to become a teacher. The audience was asked to fill out two forms, one for each student, to state what they thought of the students presentations.

Afterwards the children from the Middle School were sitting outside eating and doing the activities that were available. They were also able to go indoors and meet the faculty, do hands-on activities, see displays of different programs, get a free health screening done, look at the student art work, and much more.

Next on the list for activities was at 12 p.m., when John Teller taught the young students and the college students about drumming and singing. (Article on pg.7)

At 1 p.m. the children were seated back in the Campus Commons to listen to Bruce Wilber Jr. and Jeff Barwick. Bruce was there because he graduated last Spring. He graduated from the AODA program and is currently an AODA Counselor at Maehnowesekiyah. Bruce wanted to convince the children that drugs and alcohol isn't everything. "Alcoholism is a progressive disease that keeps getting worse," Bruce aggressively stated. Later during his speech, he tried to get the children to go up on stage. "That first hit of pot that used to get you high will cause you to smoke more and more to get that same feeling." He continued, "The same goes for alcohol. It might take one beer to get you drunk the first couple times. Then out of the blue when you try it again it will be three beers. Next thing you now you will be drinking a six pack. So if you think you know differently from me and you want to tell it to your classmates come up here," Bruce stated. What Bruce said most have sunk into the children's minds because none of them came on stage. "Coming to speak to these children gives me pride," Bruce later said. Bruce also told the students of other ways of having fun without the drugs and alcohol. "There are a lot of ways to have fun, but someone you love has showed you the bad way, or someone hasn't showed you at all yet." Bruce also mentioned his niece's car accident that took her life. "She was just like all of you. She thought that it would never happen to her. Those kind of things happen to others. Well guess what? To others you are those other people. To your friends you are other people. To your family you are other people. To me you are other people. It could happen to you just like it happened to my niece," Bruce lectured. If Bruce didn't get anything through to the children then hopefully Jeff Barwick did. When Jeff got on stage to speak he threw out frightening facts at the children. "848 people died last year

due to alcohol related accidents. 412 of those were under the age of 15. 200 of those could have been saved if they wore a seatbelt. That's every two minutes someone was dying," Jeff said. Jeff then asked how many students ever rode in a vehicle that someone had drank before driving. Many of the students raised there hands. "You should never get in a vehicle when the driver has been drinking. Call a parent. If it is your parent call an uncle, grandmother, or someone who hasn't been drinking, Jeff exclaimed. If that wasn't scary enough, Jeff continued. Jeff started with the brain and how your brain don't stop growing until you are 25 years old. Drinking and drugs causes your brain to stop growing earlier. "Alcohol is the only thing that effects every part of your brain. It effects your eyes, speech, hearing, memory, walking, and your other senses," stated Jeff. Jeff then told the children if they were interested about learning more about the brain and effects from the alcohol and drugs that they were welcome to join him at the T.R.A.I.L.S. program. The students were encouraged to ask a teacher at school on how to go. The children were then released and were able to go back outdoors to have fun before the buses came back to get them.

While outdoors the children blew bubbles, wrote with side-walk chalk, challenged each other to hula hoop contests, and they also played with frisbees. The children were laughing and running around to release the energy they received from drinking the Sun Drop slushes they had earlier. Soon after they were back on the buses and heading back to school.

Back indoors, the past graduates were getting ready for the Alumni Panel. The past graduates were able to ask the audience member questions and answer the questions from the audience. The Alumni Panel consisted of: Calvin Dave Peters who graduated in 1998 from CMN with a associates in Social work. Continued on at the University of Green Bay, Donna Geutz who also graduated in 1998 from CMN with an associates in business. She also continued her education at the UWGB. Wayne Malone also graduated in 1998 with a associates in social science. Renee O'Kimosh was one of the first to graduate from CMN in 1996 when she received an associates in Early Childhood Education, Bruce Wilber Jr. graduated from the AODA program in 2004 and Cynthia Norton finished in 2002 with a associates in business. The panel was then up for questions and answering them to their best of knowledge. "I was one of the first to graduate and we don't have a picture hanging up. All the other classes do," joked Renee.

That was not the ending of the day full of learning. There were spring cookouts held at 11:30-1:00 and from 4:00- 5:30. The public was still welcomed to come and talk to the faculty and see the graduates portfolios and the art work that the college students work hard on. This was surely a learning day for everyone involved. The Middle School children went back with many souvenirs as many of the others we were also able to attend the Celebration of Learning Day. This day was filled with giving, sharing, and receiving of many different things.

## **Sturgeon continued from front page**

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has delivered to the Menominee Reservation for the last twelve years.

Annually the Menominee Historic Preservation Officer David "Nahwahquaw" Grignon negotiates with the State of Wisconsin on behalf of the Menominee Indian Tribe to obtain the sturgeon.

Every year in the third week of April the sturgeon are delivered very close to Keshena Falls. Keshena Falls is where the ancient fish have swam up stream to their ancestral spawning ground for centuries.

Their journey begins at Lake Winnebago and continues up the Wolf River until they meet the

dam in Shawano County. When the Shawano Dam was erected it blocked the sturgeon's natural cycle. This also blocked the Menominee from harvesting their traditional food. This year the WDNR delivered some real whoppers. Bus loads of students and staff members from the Menominee schools were here to honor the sturgeon. The schools who were onsite to witness this great event were Menominee Tribal School, Keshena Primary, Menominee Indian High School and the Menominee Indian Head Start. It was a large crowd this year; many community members were also present. Four Menominee Tribal Legislators were also on hand. Vice Chairperson, Annmarie Johnson, along with legislators, Kenneth Fish, Karen Washinawatok and Gary Besaw represented the Menominee Tribal Legislature. It was a great day for everyone. The WDNR hoisted down the huge fish and the older students carried them in nets to the waters of the Chickney Creek. The younger children looked on with excitement and happiness. You could hear the 'oows' and 'awes' of the youngsters and see the pride in the faces of the older ones.

Menominee of every age were there to witness the arrival of one of the clans, through the Creator's way having found their way back home to Keshena Falls, which was their intended destination.

Sturgeon after sturgeon were placed in their ancestral waters, they looked as if they were also thankful to be returned. When they were all placed where they originally belong, Dave Grignon gave a special traditional prayer in the Menominee Language.

The Five Clan Singers also gave the sturgeon a Menominee honor song. In closing each person one by one gave a tobacco offering in the stream of the Wolf River called Chickney Creek.

It was an amazing sight. The sturgeons have returned home.